

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 EA-06 INR-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 SP-02 PM-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00 ACDA-07 TRSE-00
/058 W

-----130134 101337Z /47

R 101135Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3479

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 4752

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK

SUBJ: AFGHAN VIEW OF MILITARY TAKEOVER IN PAKISTAN

REF: A) KABUL 4509 (NOTAL), B) KABUL 4436 (NOTAL), C) KABUL 3284
(NOTAL)

1. AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTER WAHEED ABDULLAH ASKED ME TO CALL ON
HIM EVENING JULY 9. THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECT HE WISHED TO DISCUSS
WAS THE RECENT MILITARY TAKEOVER IN PAKISTAN. HE SAID THE
GOVT OF AFGHANISTAN (GOA), THROUGH ITS CONTACTS IN PAKISTAN,

HAD HAD ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE PAK MILITARY WAS PLANNING
A TAKEOVER. BECAUSE OF THIS ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE, PRES DAOUD HAD
TREATED BHUTTO'S JUN 22-23 VISIT (REFS A AND B) WITH RESERVE.

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ABDULLAH COMMENTED THAT BHUTTO HAD APPEARED A CHANGED MAN AT
THAT TIME AND, IN LIGHT OF HIS MACHINATIONS IN PAKISTAN, THE
AFGHANS HAD DECIDED HE COULD NOT BE TRUSTED.

2. SHORTLY AFTER TAKING OVER THE PAKISTANI GOVT, GEN. ZIA
CALLED IN AFGHAN AMBASSADOR ETEMADI AND, ACCORDING TO ABDULLAH,
ASSURED ETEMADI THAT THE NEW REGIME WISHED TO CONTINUE THE

"SPIRIT OF KABUL" THAT HAD BEGUN WITH BHUTTO'S JUNE 1976 VISIT TO KABUL. SPECIFICALLY, ZIA TOLD ETEMADI THAT THE PAKISTANIS WISHED TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE WITH THE AFGHANS. AFTER RECEIVING THE REPORT OF THIS CONVERSATION AND DISCUSSING IT WITH DAOUD, ABDULLAH TOLD ME HE SENT INSTRUCTIONS TO ETEMADI TO INFORM GEN. ZIA THAT AFGHANISTAN RECIPROCATES ZIA'S GOOD WISHES AND DESIRES TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE.

3. REGARDING THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN PAKISTAN, ABDULLAH SAID HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF ELECTIONS ARE NOT HELD THIS COMING OCTOBER. HE SAID HE FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THE ARMY WILL WISH THAT SOON TO REOPEN THE ELECTORAL PANDORA'S BOX. MOREOVER, HE BELIEVES THE PAK ARMY WILL JUDGE THAT THE PNA IS INCAPABLE OF STAYING UNITED TO GOVERN PAKISTAN. ABDULLAH SAID HE BELIEVES BHUTTO IS "85 PERCENT FINISHED."

4. ABDULLAH SAID HE BELIEVES THE SOVIETS ARE SOMEWHAT UNHAPPY AT THE TURN OF EVENTS IN PAKISTAN AND THE CHINESE THEREFORE ARE HAPPY. HE BELIEVES THE SHAH IS PLEASED THAT STABILITY HAS RETURNED TO PAKISTAN. HE NOTED THE GOVT OF INDIA IS BEING CIRCUMSPECT.

5. THE AFGHAN MEDIA IS REPORTING FACTUALLY, MOSTLY FROM WESTERN NEWS AGENCIES, ON THE SITUATION IN PAKISTAN. THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC AFGHAN GOVT COMMENT NOR ANY EDITORIALIZING IN THE MEDIA.

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6. COMMENT: THE AFGHANS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE TO BE RESTRAINED IN ANY PUBLIC COMMENT THEY MAKE ON THE SITUATION IN PAKISTAN WHILE BEING PRIVATELY PLEASED THAT BHUTTO, WHOM THEY REGARD AS A MANIPULATOR, HAS BEEN REMOVED AND REPLACED BY GEN. ZIA WHOM ABDULLAH CHARACTERIZED AS A STRAIGHTFORWARD -- IF NOT PARTICULARLY BRILLIANT -- MAN.

7. ABDULLAH'S GENERALLY POSITIVE REMARKS RE THE MILITARY TAKE-OVER STRIKE US AS FAIRLY SURPRISING, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE LINE TAKEN RECENTLY BY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER SAMAD GHAS (REF C) THAT A MILITARY REGIME IN PAKISTAN WOULD BE THE LEAST PALATABLE (IN AFGHAN EYES) OF THE LIKELY SCENARIOS INVOLVING DEVELOPMENTS IN PAKISTAN. THE AFGHANS HAD FELT PREVIOUSLY THAT THEY ALREADY HAD SOME INVESTMENT IN BHUTTO STEMMING FROM THE FIRST TWO DAOUD-BHUTTO SUMMIT MEETINGS. THEY MAY HAVE FELT HOWEVER THAT BHUTTO WAS INCREASINGLY LOSING HIS GRIP AND BECOMING INCREASINGLY UNPREDICTABLE. THE INITIAL LINE TAKEN BY BOTH GOA OFFICIALS, AS WELL AS BY THE AFGHAN MAN ON THE STREET, WAS THAT THE ENTIRE EPISODE REPRESENTED A DEVIOUS PLOT BY BHUTTO TO INSURE (SOMEHOW) HIS OWN POLITICAL SURVIVAL. HOWEVER, UNSUBSTANTIATED CHARGES IN THE PAKISTANI PRESS (PRIOR TO BHUTTO'S VISIT) REGARDING THE ALLEGED MOVEMENT OF AFGHAN TROOPS TOWARD

THE BORDER MAY HAVE TIPPED THE BALANCE IN THE AFGHAN ASSESSMENT.
ABDULLAH'S DISCOURSE IMPLIES THAT THE GOA HAS, FOR THE MOST PART,
WRITTEN OFF BHUTTO AS A MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURE WITH WHOM IT
HAS TO DEAL, AND THAT THE
AFGHANS ARE TAKING AN UPBEAT APPROACH
TO THE ZIA MILITARY REGIME, PROBABLY REGARDING IT AS A FAIT
ACCOMPLI WITH WHICH KABUL WILL HAVE TO COPE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KABUL04752
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770245-0465
Format: TEL
From: KABUL
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770773/aaaactlx.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 013cf96d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 77 KABUL 4509, 77 KABUL 4436, 77 KABUL 3284
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1910484
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AFGHAN VIEW OF MILITARY TAKEOVER IN PAKISTAN
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, AF, PK
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/013cf96d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009